

# **Program Assessment is Helping Produce Quality Technical Programs That Teach Academic Content Through Applied Learning**



Pictured from left: Arlen Sanders, business and industry representative; Wayne King, Office of Career and Technical Education and Ronnie Partin, observer and principal of Corbin ATC.

By definition, the program assessment process evaluates Level III preparatory programs in school districts operating vocational centers or departments and KY Tech schools to ensure that secondary technical education programs meet the needs of students transitioning into postsecondary education or entering directly into the workforce.

By design, the program assessment process provides valuable information to instructors and administrators to use in their ongoing efforts to improve the status of their programs, enhance the

learning experience for the students and to lend a helping hand in bringing a collaborative environment to the school and the district in which it is located.

That collaborating spirit thrives throughout the state including Casey County where, during a recent assessment visit to the ATC, district personnel got a first hand look at the assessment process in action through the team efforts of educators and business professionals brought together to evaluate specific program areas at the school.

“The impact this school has on this system is invaluable,” said Linda Hatter, superintendent of Casey Co. public schools. “The ATC, in combination with the traditional course study at the high school truly prepares our students for the real world.”



Pictured from left: Tim Goodlett, Wayne King, Bob Hayes, David Gilliam, Arlen Sanders, David Horseman, Linda Hatter and Ronnie Partin.





**Pictured top: David Horseman;  
above: Horseman with  
Superintendent Linda Hatter.**

“I don’t think you’ll find any two schools that work together better than our high school and the ATC,” said Tim Goodlett, principal at Casey Co. High School. “It is certainly an asset to have the faculty and programs here to help support what we are doing at the high school. We collaborate to the fullest degree to benefit our students.”

Benefiting the students is really what program assessment is all about and really the way it should be approached according to Casey Co. ATC Principal David Horseman.

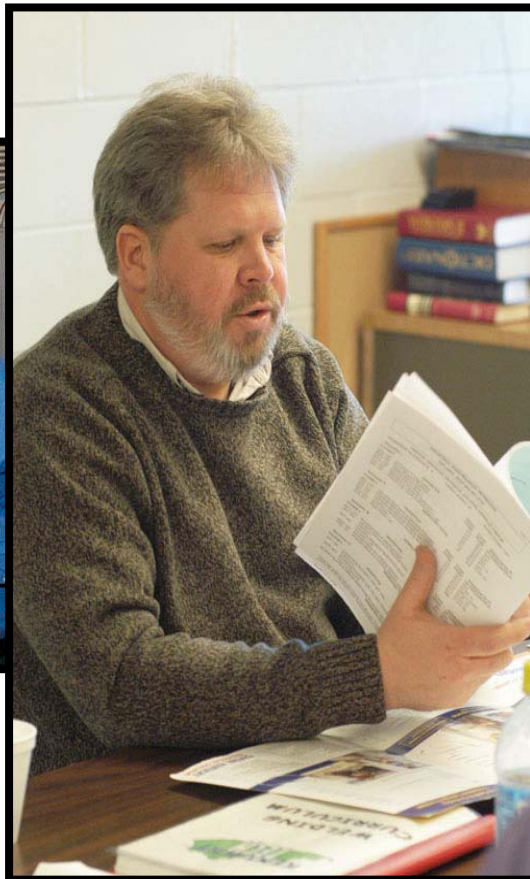
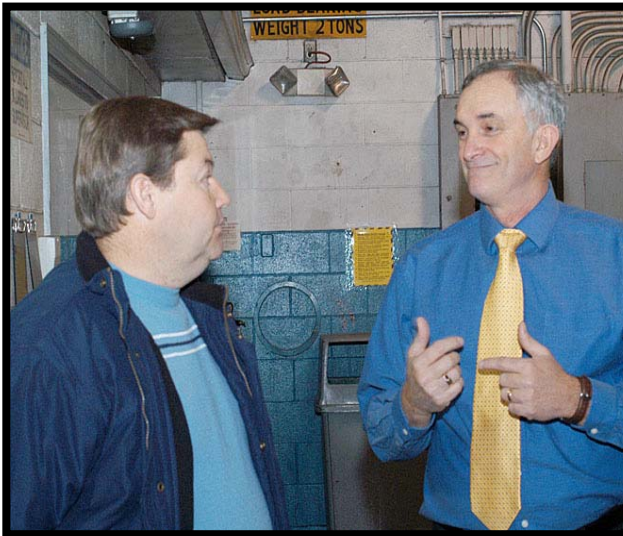
“The assessment is a snapshot of the individual programs we have here, providing a way to tell us what we are doing right and helping us to recognize any weaknesses we may have,” he said. “From a business standpoint, it allows us to set forth a model for industry to see and know of the readiness that our students possess for the workforce. From a curriculum standpoint, it’s a way for KCTCS and regional universities to know that we are preparing students for them.”

Another positive aspect about the whole program assessment process is the accountability of the technical programs in relationship to their academic counterparts as well as preparation for the next level of education.

“Technical programs give relevance to what the academic programs are teaching and I believe the assessment process helps those programs be accountable,” said Mr. Bob Hayes, retired educator from Morehead State University.

KCTCS representative David Gilliam said, “The process is an excellent opportunity for the instructional staff to take a look at their programs, reflect on their accomplishments and look ahead to the challenges of the future.”

The Office of Career and Technical Education’s (OCTE) Myra Wilson, Program Assessment Branch manager lauds the process as a way to bring educational partners together for the betterment of technical education.



**Pictured from left, above: Tim Goodlett and David Horseman; center: David Gilliam; right: Bob Hayes.**



“The program assessment process incorporates assistance from university educators, and representatives from KCTCS and business and industry to ensure high-quality technical programs that teach academic content through applied learning,” she said. “The combination of technical and academic skills provides our students with the necessary tools to enter the workforce or transition to postsecondary education.”

Wayne King, administrative consultant for the branch sees marked improvement in the programs over the last few years.

“Technical programs are evaluated on a 4.0 scale and have improved from an average of 2.90 in 2001-2002 to a 3.45 in 2004-2005.” he said.

“For KY Tech, the success in improved evaluations has become the main factor for our candidacy as the first (district) of technical schools to be accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS),” said John Marks, director of OCTE’s division of education and training.

Program assessment has proven to be valuable in the process of maintaining and improving technical programs; but more than that, it has become an invaluable tool in paving the way for students as they prepare for real world experiences in the workplace and postsecondary education.



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**May 10, 2005**

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